Yoga is skill in the performance of actions.—*The Bhagavad-Gita*

THEOSOPHY

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THE GREAT ABSTRACTIONS

TO have a mind is to be able to think general thoughts about the nature of things. It is at least to taste the flavor of universal meanings, of great, resolving conceptions. To have the idea of the One is not the same as knowing the One—if, indeed, so ultimate a "knowing" should be spoken of at all—yet the *idea* of That upon which all depends, unto which all must return, may become a focus for progressive realizations of the unity which all men long for in their hearts.

So, to have a mind is to possess potential divinity. To have a mind is also to be capable of simulations of knowledge and to mistake them for knowledge. How can we know when our knowledge is "real"? Simply by asking this question we reveal the paradox of all intellectual certainty. For if we say that for one who really knows, there can be no doubt of his knowledge, and then turn to history, we are aghast at the bloody record left by men who had no doubt of their knowledge—or claimed to have no doubt.

Perhaps we can settle the question by saying that to know is nothing less than to *be* what one knows. This would mean the capacity to enter into all the cases of a general proposition—and the cases of a general proposition are infinite. It would mean, for example, being able to know what, exactly, is the truly brotherly act in all possible human relationships. This would be the consequence of "really knowing" that Brotherhood is a law of Nature.

Such is the wisdom we understand to be the possession of Great

Teachers. We have heard that They have this kind of knowledge, and we believe it. But seeing is believing, we say, and have we seen this wisdom in action?

Well, we may think we have seen it in those representations of the Wisdom Religion we have at the hands of H. P. Blavatsky. Is this an "intellectual" judgment? The intellect certainly enters into it. And surely something more. The judgment of the mind, in the fullest meaning of mind, seems to involve a resonance of thought, a movement back and forth between thought and feeling with lightning-like rapidity. The heart hungers and longs and the mind selects and determines; it is no mechanical sharing of the burdens of cognition, but a searching by the whole man. And so, by the use of all our heart and mind we reach what we can only call faith—the inner conviction that truth has been encountered. An encounter with truth may not be to "know" it, but to know, as well as we can know anything at all, that it is there.

If a man has really had an encounter with truth, he may expect to receive confirmations. These, by the metabolism of psychological growth, accomplish the transformation of faith into knowledge. There will be doubts and questioning, of course, but their region of activity changes. What began as doubts concerning the existence of such knowledge changes into doubts as to whether it has been understood. Growth in understanding of the Great Abstractions comes with increasing awareness of the various cases in which they apply. To know what is right, and why, in a world filled with paradox and contradiction—this is possible only for those in whom the Great Abstractions have become the constant tools of individual perception. One can see this without being capable of it; one can recognize the sign-manual of knowledge without yet possessing it for himself. He can see the beauty of its form, the touch of its tenderness, the dissolving penetration of its action.

Such knowledge has an atmosphere. It moves from object to object like a glow of illumination. It has a life of its own, and an absorbing presence. Any real teacher has this in some degree. The difficulty in recognizing a teacher lies in being able to want or to accept what he is able to teach.

To one who had experienced trouble from the trials and struggles of the Theosophical Movement, William Q. Judge wrote:

> A friend who is dealing blows to right and left, and would

> fain make of herself an enemy, has not spared you in that respect. But I think we have only to remember what we have already learned for ourselves—that it is all from illusion—and then we shall not mind and shall be prepared to wait until great Time brings its magic changes. We can wait: "those also serve who only stand and wait." And that, too, has to be learned—no doubt like other things—through pain. But let us not forget that it is we who make our own pain. I have found that grief and sorrow spring only from wrong thinking. Not wrong in the sense of wicked, but in the sense of something out of harmony with the scheme of Nature; something *unscientific* and therefore contrary to the highest ethics. If we confined our thoughts as well as acts to our own clear duty, leaving results and the morrow to the Law, what room would there be for sorrow?
>
> So, let us lean back and smile at the show of things, knowing that even if we are tied by hands and feet for a spell of days or years the heart of the world will throb on quite well without us. Therefore, do not let us get mentally involved in this or any other matter, but stand aside—spectators, though doing with power all that comes to us to do and ready to do nothing if that be needed. Then, Brother, let us be glad at whatever comes and at all that is said and whispered, for though today may seem dark, these things will work out for good.

Here is a luminous wisdom, and also a cryptic wisdom, if one chooses to read it so. And so it must be, we may come to see, with all truly wise communications. It is the presence of egoity which makes them wise, and the same factor of egoity requires the key of another egoity to read them well; and to read them well may not be to read all that is there.

So the wise are unaccustomed to making claims. It would not help matters, and would only be an imitation of the unwise, who know no better.

Thus claims in behalf of the wise seem inappropriate. Yet it is natural and right to call attention to expressions one has found to be filled with wisdom. And to speak, now and then, of the great-hearted compassion of those who afford this wisdom—which is, after all, another kind of evidence of truth.

ON THE SYMBOLISM OF THE SERPENT

THEOSOPHY, or the ancient Wisdom-Religion, is based upon three fundamental propositions. Being essential to an understanding of the philosophy, these basic ideas are presented in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine*. They are suggested, however, even earlier than that, in a symbol on the cover of the book—a circle in the form of a serpent biting its own tail, enclosing an interlaced triangle which, in turn, embraces an ansated cross.

From time immemorial, the circle has been considered a fitting symbol for the Eternal, Beginningless and Endless, Self-existent Reality. There is no point on a circle which can be regarded as its beginning or end. Also, every point on the circumference is equidistant from the center—no point occupying a closer or more favored position than another; all have equal value. So, perhaps, on a plane surface, the circle pure and simple is the best symbol for the Absolute, Homogeneous IT.

But, let us see what happens when the circle is drawn in the form of a serpent swallowing its tail. Let us imagine also the creature nibbling away at the tail, each nibble taking him a little more forward, consuming a little more and a little more. With each nibble the circle gets smaller and smaller. But where is he to stop? Somewhere along the line the process must cease. The human mind rebels at the thought that the creature can nibble away endlessly and completely swallow himself and disappear. Why is this so? Because when he gets down to the part that does the swallowing, he cannot do away with that. There is nothing else to swallow it with.

Thus, this simple symbol may give some idea of what H.P.B. meant when she said that the "Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE" is "beyond the range and reach of thought." THAT in man which does the thinking cannot itself be a thought—there is nothing else to think it with. The Perceiver cannot itself be perceived—there is nothing else to perceive it with. This idea is beautifully expressed in the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* where the sage Yajnavalkya discourses upon the "higher wisdom":

> The Spirit sees not; yet seeing not, he sees. For the energy that dwelt in sight cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is no other besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to see.
>
> The Spirit thinks not; yet thinking not, he thinks. For the energy that dwelt in thinking cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to think of.
>
> The Spirit knows not; yet knowing not, he knows. For the energy that dwelt in thinking cannot cease, because it is everlasting. But there is nothing else besides the Spirit, or separate from him, for him to know.

One of the intriguing features of the serpent symbol is the ingenious way in which it combines the idea of the Infinite with that of the finite. The form taken by the body of the serpent, that is to say the circle, represents the Infinite, while the serpent itself, which has two ends, represents the finite. The head and the tail, the swallowing part and that which is swallowed, represent duality, or the pairs of opposites—activity and passivity, positive and negative, spirit and matter. For it is only when "duality supervenes," says the teaching, that manifestation can occur. The serpent now is a symbol of manifestation.

All manifestation, states *The Secret Doctrine,* is cyclic in nature. Does this mean that there is an endless repetition of the same events, played over and over again like a broken record? Obviously it does not. Each cycle has for its starting point the accumulated experience of all those preceding it. Each spiral represents an advance. If the head of the serpent is considered as the starting-point of the cycle, the progress gained is through the downward and upward course, when it turns back on itself spirally. Each spiral feeds the next; and, although every cycle has a head and a tail, a beginning and an end, still, the series of revolutions is infinite.

The grand inclusive cycle, in which all the others are but stages, is the pilgrimage of Soul, which is said to proceed from the top, in spirit. The gradual descent of spirit into grosser and grosser forms of matter and the gradual reascent to the top again provide the Pilgrim with varied types of experience and knowledge, none of which is ever lost.

From the serpent's head, then, on the highest spiritual plane, the Divine Spark journeys down one arc of the descending spiral, propelled by natural impulse, until it reaches the bottom, the balance

point between spirit and matter, where Man, as we know Man, appears. Then the journey cycles upward by self-induced and self-devised efforts, until the Spark is finally reabsorbed into the Highest.

The body of the serpent may be composed of countless atoms, each a center of consciousness. Yet, no matter where any one of these centers, or lives, happens to be on its journey, it is never at any time outside the circle. From this it is seen that the Source of all is One, just as the Goal for all is One. But how many know that Source and Goal are also ONE.

THE SERPENT IN MYTHOLOGY

The wonderful ability of the serpent to slough its skin and so renew its youth has earned for it throughout the world the character of the master of the mystery of rebirth—of which the moon, waxing and waning, sloughing its shadow and again waxing, is the celestial sign. The moon is the lord and measure of the life-creating rhythm of the womb, and therewith of time; through which beings come and go; lord of the mystery of birth and equally of death—which two, in sum, are aspects of one state of being. The moon is the lord of tides and of the dew that falls at night to refresh the verdure on which cattle graze. But the serpent, too, is a lord of waters. Dwelling in the earth, among the roots of trees, frequenting springs, marshes, and water courses, it glides with a motion of waves; or it ascends like a liana into branches, there to hang like some fruit of death. . . . Likewise a dual association of fire and water attaches to the lightning of its strike, the forked darting of its active tongue, and the lethal burning of its poison. When imagined as biting its tail, as the mythological uroboros, it suggests the waters that in all archaic cosmologies surround—as well as lie beneath and permeate —the floating circular island Earth.

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL

letters • questions • comment

Theosophy is usually referred to as a "philosophy," which may be a disadvantage so far as interesting the general public in the teachings is concerned. People seem to have neither the time nor the inclination to engage in the amount of study required to grasp philosophical ideas, and our night schools, though well attended, are primarily concerned with vocations or arts and crafts. How can Theosophy be presented so that it will attract the man of today?

It is well to distinguish between a particular presentation of Theosophy and the broad current of ideas sweeping through the history of man's evolution which we call the Theosophical Movement. The distinction is clearly stated in the pamphlet "The United Lodge of Theosophists—Its Mission and Its Future":

> . . . The Theosophical Movement [is one] which has the whole of Nature for its object, and which began far back in the night of Time. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great Movement is to be discerned. The Theosophical Movement is moral, ethical, spiritual, universal, invisible save in effect, and continuous. . . .
>
> It should be clearly recognized that there is a wide difference between the Theosophical Movement and any theosophical society or organization. Theosophy has existed eternally throughout cycles upon cycles of the Past, and will ever exist throughout the infinitudes of the Future, because Theosophy is synonymous with EVERLASTING TRUTH—established Truth, recorded in various ages, in various climes, throughout an untold series of incessant observations. On the other hand, a society formed for theosophical work is a visible organization, an effect, a machine for conserving energy and putting it to use; it is not, nor can be, universal, nor is it continuous. Organized Theosophical bodies are made by men for their better cooperation, but, being mere outer shells, they must change from time to time as human defects come out, and as the great underlying spiritual Movement compels such alterations.

Thus, work is constantly going forward, for always there are

some whose concern is the welfare of humanity in one or another aspect, and who therefore are indirectly engaged in this Movement. Such individuals, working in different areas and among different people, are not necessarily to be found attending Theosophical meetings, but their practical altruism nonetheless furthers the Theosophical Movement of their time.

If we take this broad approach, then perhaps to say that Theosophy is a philosophy, meaning *only* a philosophy, would constiute a limitation. Yet we can certainly say that the student tends to view life in general, and his life in particular, in a philosophical manner. This may be a way in which the non-student can be reached. An individual whose only reactions to events are in terms of like or dislike, enjoyment or displeasure, is constantly swayed by those events and is subject to them. But a beginning to the search for knowledge is made when he commences to question, to ask why—in other words, to view existence philosophically. Anyone can be encouraged to think along these lines, especially to look for causes lying at the root of events. Obviously one cannot always determine these causes, but a beginning is made when one recognizes that any action or event is rooted in a prior cause. Thus the idea of law, or Karma, can be introduced.

Any attempt to present the teachings to a person who does not question—either because he has complete trust and faith in his deity or because his view of the universe involves only a mechanistic explanation—will probably meet with scant success. Here we should remember that "Theosophy is for those who want it." Yet if centers exist where theosophical ideas are discussed, it will be that much easier for the inquirer to "find" them when he is ready; and if there are students prepared to present the ideas in whatever manner seems appropriate, they may pave the way for a more formal presentation of the philosophy.

It is well if the student frequently reminds himself that his own nature, as well as that of all other men, is, in its permanent aspect, "moral, ethical, spiritual, universal, invisible save in effect, and continuous." These are all characteristics having to do with man's relationship with his fellow-man from the standpoint of the essential unity of life. Holding this point of view, we may more easily establish a common ground of understanding, and eventually, at the proper time, suggest the existence of a body of literature well worth the study of one who is concerned with the age-old mysteries of life.

THE WISDOM RELIGION

THE MYSTERIES IV

THE ritualism of primitive Christianity sprang from ancient Masonry. The latter was, in its turn, the offspring of the, then, almost dead Mysteries. Of these we have now a few words to say.

It is well known that throughout antiquity, besides the popular worship composed of the dead-letter forms and empty exoteric ceremonies, every nation had its *secret* cult known to the world as the MYSTERIES. Strabo, one among many others, warrants for this assertion. No one received admittance into them save those prepared for it by special training. The neophytes instructed in the upper temples were initiated into the final Mysteries in the crypts. These instructions were the last surviving heirlooms of archaic wisdom, and it is under the guidance of high Initiates that they were *enacted*. We use the word "enacted" purposely; for the *oral* instructions *at low breath* were given only in the crypts, in solemn silence and secrecy. During the public classes and general teachings, the lessons in cosmogony and theogony were delivered in allegorical representation, the *modus operandi* of the gradual evolution of Kosmos, worlds, and finally of our earth, of gods and men, all was imparted in a symbolical way. The great public performances during the festivals of the Mysteries, were witnessed by the masses and the *personified* truths worshipped by the multitudes—*blindly*. Alone the high Initiates, the *Epoptæ,* understood their language and real meaning. All this, and so far, is well known to the world of scholars.

It was a common claim of all the ancient nations that the real mysteries of what is called so unphilosophically, *creation,* were divulged to the elect of our (fifth) race by its first dynasties of *divine* Rulers—gods in flesh, "divine incarnations," or *Avatars,* so called. The last Stanzas, given from the *Book of Dzyan* in the *Secret Doctrine* (Vol. II, p. 21), speak of those who ruled over the descendants

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NOTE.—This series began in the November, 1966 issue. This installment comprises sections VII-XI of H. P. Blavatsky's article "The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry," first printed in *Lucifer* for May, 1889, and last reprinted in THEOSOPHY 45:196-203.

"produced from the holy stock," and . . . "who re-descended, who made peace with the fifth (race), who taught and instructed it."

The phrase "made peace" shows that there had been a previous *quarrel.* The fate of the Atlanteans in our philosophy, and that of the *prediluvians* in the Bible, corroborates the idea. Once more—many centuries before the Ptolemies—the same abuse of the sacred knowledge crept in amongst the initiates of the Sanctuary in Egypt. Preserved for countless ages in all their purity, the sacred teachings of the gods, owing to personal ambition and selfishness, became corrupted again. The meaning of the symbols found itself but too often desecrated by unseemly interpretations, and very soon the Eleusinian Mysteries remained the only ones pure from adulteration and sacrilegious innovations. These were in honour of (Ceres) Demeter, or Nature, and were celebrated in Athens, the flowers of the intellect of Asia Minor and Greece being initiated thereinto. In his 4th Book, Zosimus states that these Initiates embraced *the whole of mankind;* while Aristides calls the Mysteries the *common temple of the earth.*

It is to preserve some reminiscence of this "temple," and to rebuild it, if need be, that certain elect ones among the initiated began to be *set apart.* This was done by their High Hierophants in every century, from the time when the sacred allegories showed the first signs of desecration and decay. For the great *Eleusinia* finally shared the same fate as the others. Their earlier excellency and purpose are described by Clement of Alexandria who shows the greater Mysteries divulging the secrets and the mode of construction of the Universe, this being the beginning, the end and the ultimate goal of human knowledge, for in them was shown to the initiated Nature and all things *as they are.* This is the Pythagorean *Gnosis.* Epictetus speaks of these instructions in the highest terms: "All that is ordained therein was established by our masters for the instruction of men and the correction of our customs." Plato asserts in the *Phædo* the same: the object of the Mysteries was to re-establish the soul in its primordial purity, or *that state of perfection from which it had* fallen.

But there came a day when the Mysteries deviated from their purity in the same way as the exoteric religions. This began when the State bethought itself, on the advice of Aristogeiton (510 B.C.), of drawing from the *Eleusinia* a constant and prolific source of income. A law was passed to that effect. Henceforth, no one could

be initiated without paying a certain sum of money for the privilege. That boon which could hitherto be acquired only at the price of incessant, almost superhuman effort, toward virtue and excellency, was now to be purchased for so much gold. Laymen—and even priests themselves—while accepting the desecration lost eventually their past reverence for the inner Mysteries, and this led to further profanation of the Sacred Science. The rent made in the veil widened with every century; and more than ever the Supreme Hierophants, dreading the final publication and distortion of the most holy secrets of nature, laboured to eliminate them from the *inner* programme, limiting the full knowledge thereof but to the few. It is those *set apart* who soon became the only custodians of the divine heirloom of the ages. Seven centuries later, we find Apuleius, his sincere inclination toward magic and the mystical notwithstanding, writing in his *Golden Ass* a bitter satire against the hypocrisy and debauchery of certain orders of *half*-initiated priests. It is through him also, that we learn that in his day (second century A.D.) the Mysteries had become so universal that persons of all ranks and conditions, in every country, men, women, and children all were *initiated!* Initiation had become as necessary in his day as baptism has since become with the Christians; and, as the latter is now, so the former had become then—*i.e.*, meaningless, and a purely dead-letter ceremony of mere form. Still later, the fanatics of the new religion laid their heavy hand on the Mysteries.

The *Epoptæ*, they "who see things as they are," disappeared one by one, emigrating into regions inaccessible to the Christians. The *Mystæ* (from *Mystes* or "veiled") "they who see things only as they appear" remained very soon, alone, sole masters of the situation.

It is the former, the "set apart," who have preserved the true secrets; it is the *Mystæ*, those who knew them only superficially, who laid the first foundation stone of modern masonry; and it is from this half pagan, half converted primitive fraternity of Masons that Christian ritualism and most of its dogmas were born. Both the *Epoptæ* and the *Mystæ* are entitled to the name of *Masons*: for both carrying out their pledges to, and the injunction of their long departed Hierophants and "Kings" *rebuilt*, the Epoptæ their "lower," and the Mystæ, their "upper" *temples*. For such were the irrespective appellations in antiquity, and are so to this day in certain regions. Sophocles speaks in the *Electra* (Act 2) of the foundations of Athens—the site of the Eleusinian Mysteries—as being the

"sacred edifice of the gods," *i.e.,* built by the *gods.* Initiation was spoken of as "walking into the temple," and "cleaning," or *rebuilding the temple* referred to the *body* of an initiate on his last and supreme trial. (*Vide* St. John's Gospel, ii, 19.) The esoteric doctrine, also, was sometimes called by the name of "Temple" and popular exoteric religion, by that of "city." To *build a temple* meant to found an esoteric school; to "build a city temple" signified to establish a public cult. Therefore, the true surviving "Masons" of the *lower* Temple, or the *crypt,* the sacred place of initiation, are the only custodians of the true *Masonic* secrets now lost to the world. We yield willingly to the modern Fraternity of Masons the title of "Builders of the *higher* Temple," as the *à priori* superiority of the comparative adjective is as illusionary as the blaze of the burning bush of Moses itself in the Templars' Lodges.

The misunderstood allegory known as the Descent into *Hades,* has wrought infinite mischief. The exoteric "fable" of Hercules and Theseus descending *into the infernal regions;* the journey thither of Orpheus, who found his way by the power of his lyre ; of Krishna, and finally of Christ, who "descended into Hell and the third day rose again from the dead"—was twisted out of recognition by the non-initiated *adapters* of pagan rites and transformers thereof, into Church rites and dogmas.

Astronomically, this *descent into hell* symbolized the Sun during the autumnal equinox when abandoning the higher sidereal regions —there was a supposed fight between him and the Demon of Darkness who got the best of our luminary. Then the Sun was imagined to undergo a *temporary death* and to descend into the infernal regions. But mystically, it typified the initiatory rites in the crypts of the temple, called the Underworld. Bacchus, Herakles, Orpheus, Asklepios and all the other visitors of the crypt, *all descended into hell and ascended thence on the third day,* for all were initiates and "Builders of the lower Temple." The words addressed by Hermes to Prometheus, chained on the arid rocks of the Caucasus—*i.e.,* bound by ignorance to his physical body and devoured therefore by the vultures of passion—apply to every neophyte, to every *Chrestos* on trial. "To such labours look thou for no termination until the (or *a*) god shall appear as a substitute in thy pangs and shall be willing to go both to gloomy Hades and to the murky depths around Tartarus." (Æschylus: *Prometheus,* 1027, ff.) They mean simply that until Prometheus (or man) could find the "God," or Hierophant

(the Initiator) who would willingly descend into the crypts of initiation, and walk around Tartarus with him, the vulture of passion would never cease to gnaw his vitals.[1] Æschylus as a pledged Initiate could say no more; but Aristophanes less pious, or more daring, divulges the secret to those who are not blinded by a too strong preconception, in his immortal satire on Heracles' *descent into Hell.* (*Frogs.*) There we find the chorus of the "blessed ones" (the initiated), the Elysian Fields, the arrival of Bacchus (the god Hierophant) with Herakles, the reception with lighted torches, emblems of *new* LIFE *and* RESURRECTION from the darkness of human ignorance to the light of spiritual knowledge—eternal LIFE. Every word of the brilliant satire shows the inner meaning of the poet:

> Wake, burning torches . . . for thou comest
> Shaking them in thy hand, Iacche,
> Phosphoric *star of the nightly rite.*

All such final initiations took place during the night. To speak, therefore, of anyone as having descended into Hades, was equivalent in antiquity to calling him a *full initiate.* To those who feel inclined to reject this explanation, I would offer a query. Let them explain, in that case, the meaning of a sentence in the sixth book of Virgil's *Æneid.* What can the poet mean, if not that which is asserted above, when introducing the aged Anchises in the Elysian fields, he makes him advise Æneas his son, to travel to Italy . . . where he would have to fight in Latium, a rude and barbarous people; therefore, he adds, before you venture there *"Descend into Hades," i.e.,* get yourself initiated.

The benevolent clericals, who are so apt to send us on the slightest provocation to Tartarus and the infernal regions, do not suspect what good wishes for us the threat contains; and what a holy character one must be before one gets into such a sanctified place.

It is not pagans alone who had their Mysteries. Bellarmin states that the early Christians adopted, after the example of pagan ceremonies, the custom of assembling in the church the nights preceding their festivals, to hold vigils or "wakes." Their ceremonies were

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[1] The dark region in the crypt, into which the candidate under initiation was supposed to throw away for ever his worst passions and lusts. Hence the allegories by Homer, Ovid, Virgil, etc., all accepted literally by the modern scholar. Phlegethon was the river in Tartarus into which the initiate was thrice plunged by the Hierophant, after which the trials were over and the new man *born anew.* He had left in the dark stream the old sinful man for ever, and issued on the third day, from Tartarus, as an *individuality*, the *personality* being dead. Such characters as Ixion, Tantalus, Sisyphus, etc., are each a personification of some human passion.

performed at first with the most edifying holiness and purity. But very shortly after that, such immoral abuses crept into these "assemblies" that the bishops found it necessary to abolish them. We have read in dozens of works about the licentiousness in the pagan religious festivals. Cicero is quoted (*de Leg.* lib. 2, cap. 15) showing Diagondas, the Theban, finding no other means of remedying such disorders in the ceremonies than the suppression of the Mysteries themselves. When we contrast the two kinds of celebrations, however, the Pagan Mysteries hoary with age centuries before our era, and the Christian *Agapæ* and others in a religion hardly born and claiming such a purifying influence on its converts, we can only pity the mental blindness of its defenders and quote for their benefit Roscommon, who asks:

> When you begin with so much pomp and show,
> Why is the end so little and so low?

Primitive Christianity—being derived from the primitive Masonry—had its grip, pass-words, and degrees of initiation. "Masonry" is an old term but it came into use very late in our era. Paul calls himself a "master-builder" and he was one. The ancient Masons called themselves by various names and most of the Alexandrian Eclectics, the Theosophists of Ammonias Saccas and the later Neo-Platonists, were all virtually Masons. They were all bound by oath to secrecy, considered themselves a Brotherhood, and had also their signs of recognition. The Eclectics or Philaletheians comprised within their ranks the ablest and most learned scholars of the day, as also several crowned heads. Says the author of *The Eclectic Philosophy*:

> Their doctrines were adopted by pagans and Christians in Asia and Europe, and for a season everything seemed favourable for a general fusion of religious belief. The Emperors Alexander Severus and Julian embraced them. Their predominating influence upon religious ideas excited the jealousy of the Christians of Alexandria. The school was removed to Athens, and finally closed by the Emperor Justinian. Its professors *withdrew to Persia*,[2] where they made many disciples.

A few more details may prove perchance, interesting. We know that Eleusinian Mysteries survived all others. While the secret cults of the minor gods such as the *Curates*, the *Dactyli*, the worship of

[2] And we may add, beyond, to India and Central Asia, for we find their influence everywhere in Asiatic countries

Adonis, of the Kabiri, and even those of old Egypt had entirely disappeared under the revengeful and cruel hand of the pitiless Theodosius,[3] the Mysteries of Eleusis could not be so easily disposed of. They were indeed the religion of mankind, and shone in all their splendour if not in their primitive purity. It took several centuries to abolish them, and they could not be entirely suppressed before the year 396 of our era. It is then that the "Builders of the *higher,* or City Temple" appeared first on the scene and worked unrelentingly to infuse their rituals and peculiar dogmas into the nascent and ever fighting and quarrelling church. The triple *Sanctus* of the Roman Catholic Mass is the triple S.·. S.·. S.·. of these early Masons, and is the modern prefix to their documents or "any written *balustre*—the initial of *Salutem,* or Health" as cunningly put by a Mason. "This triple masonic salutation is the most ancient among their greetings." (*Ragon.*)

But they did not limit their grafts on the tree of the Christian religion to this alone. During the Mysteries of Eleusis, wine represented Bacchus and Ceres—wine and bread, or corn.[4] Now Ceres or Demeter was the female *productive principle* of the Earth; the spouse of Father Æther, or Zeus; and Bacchus, the son of Zeus-Jupiter, was his father manifested: in other words, Ceres and Bacchus were the personifications of Substance and Spirit, the two vivifying principles in Nature and on Earth. The hierophant Initiator presented symbolically, before the final *revelation* of the mysteries, wine and bread to the candidate, who ate and drank, in token that the spirit was to quicken matter: *i.e.,* the divine wisdom of the Higher-Self

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[3] The murderer of the Thessalonians, who were butchered by this pious son of the Church.

[4] Bacchus is certainly of Indian origin. Pausanias shows him the first to lead an expedition against India, and the first to throw a bridge over the Euphrates. "The cable which served to unite the two opposite shores being exhibited to this day," writes this historian, "it being woven from vine-branches and trailings of ivy." (X, 29, 4.) Arrianus and Quintus-Curtius explained the allegory of Bacchus' birth from the thigh of Zeus, by saying that he was born on the Indian Mount *Meru* (from *meros* thigh). We are aware that Eratosthenes and Strabo believed the Indian Bacchus had been invented by flatterers to simply please Alexander, believed to have conquered India as Bacchus is supposed to have done. But on the other hand Cicero mentions the god as a Son of Thyoné and Nisus; and Dionysus means the god Dis from Mount Nys in India. Bacchus crowned with ivy, or *Kissos* is Krishna, one of whose names was *Kissen.* Dionysus was pre-eminently the god who was expected to liberate the *souls of men* from their prisons of flesh—Hades and the human Tartarus, in one of its symbolical senses. Cicero calls Orpheus a son of Bacchus; and there is a tradition which not only makes Orpheus come from India (he being called *orphos* dark, of tawny complexion) but identifies him with Arjuna, the *chela* and adoptive son of Krishna. (*Vide* Five Years of Theosophy, Art. "Was Writing known before Panini?")

was to enter into and take possession of his inner Self or Soul through what was to be revealed to him.

This rite was adopted by the Christian Church. The Hierophant who was called the "Father," has now passed, part and parcel—*minus* knowledge—into the "Father" priest, who today administers the same communion. Jesus calls himself a vine and *his* "Father" the husbandman; and his injunction at the Last Supper shows his thorough knowledge of the symbolical meaning (*Vide infra,* note) of bread and wine, and his identification with the *logoi* of the ancients. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "This *is* a hard saying," he adds. . . . "The words (*rhemata,* or arcane utterances) that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life." They are; because "it is the Spirit that quickeneth." Furthermore these *rhemata* of Jesus are indeed the arcane utterances *of an Initiate.*

But between this noble rite, as old as symbolism, and its later anthropomorphic interpretation, now known as *transubstantiation,* there is an abyss of ecclesiastical sophistry. With what force the exclamation—"Woe unto you lawyers. For *ye have taken away the key of knowledge*" (and will not permit even now *gnosis* to be given to others); with what tenfold force, I say, it applies more now than then. Aye; that *gnosis,* "ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were (and are) entering ye prevented," and still prevent. Nor has the modern priesthood alone laid itself open to this blame. Masons, the descendants, or at any rate the successors, of the "Builders of the upper Temple" during the Mysteries, they who ought to know better, will pooh-pooh and scorn any one among their own brethren who will remind them of their true origin. Several great modern Scholars and Kabalists, who are Masons, and could be named, received worse than the cold shoulder from their Brethren. It is ever the same old, old story. Even Ragon, the most learned in his day among all the Masons of our century, complains of it, in these words:

> All the ancient narratives attest that the initiations in the days of old had an imposing ceremonial, and became memorable for ever through the grand truths divulged and the knowledge that resulted therefrom. And yet there are *some modern Masons, of half-learning,* who hasten to treat as charlatans all those who successfully remind of, and explain to them these ancient ceremonies! (*Cours. Philos.* p. 87 note [2].)

YOUTH FORUM

In a world rife with rebellion, war, and social revolt, how might Theosophy help one to understand the causes behind these conditions?

(*Concluded*)

Continuing our discussion of the causes behind war and social revolt, we obviously need to understand why some men are willing to stake their careers, fortunes, and lives, on efforts to change other men. One reason is that an almost endless number of impressive "facts" in daily experience convince us that the world outside is an independent reality filled with forces which vie for control of mankind. The suffocating psychological mood thus created can easily be blamed on the successful efforts of the righteous manipulators: on the gimmicks of advertisers, the hollow admonitions of politicians, and the insidious proselytizing which many of us pursue because we have some "truth" we think would be good for others.

There is little wonder that issues concerning the condition of a man and his family or nation should ultimately cause him to arm himself and fight. "Resolve to fight," says Krishna, "A soldier of the Kshatriya tribe hath no duty superior to lawful war, and just to thy wish the door of heaven is found open before thee, through this glorious unsought fight which only fortune's favored soldiers may obtain." Although some men will fight by trying to change public opinion or people's attitudes, and others by trying to change the environment with armies or, less drastically, with urban renewal, the decision to act will be guided by one's sense of who he is and who or what others are. This feeling of self and not-self, of what is ours and what the world's, is a kind of built-in compass for directing one's life.

Here, through our personal image of Self, are mirrored most of our ideas of what is "good" and "evil," of what we feel to be "spirit" and "matter." This split, this duality in being, is explained by some as a reflection of the environment. For these, Krishna's advice to fight sounds like a battle cry, and seems to encourage militant at-

tack on oppressive conditions. Other renderings, however, are possible for this portion of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. To the man who feels that the external world (including his body and tumultuous senses) is but an extension of his inner life, a different center of action may become evident. Krishna's words simply encourage him to come to terms with himself—the fractured condition of much of life is viewed as only a caricature of the growing and dying impulses within consciousness.

In order to come to terms with the "world of matter," some men develop into those "All-denying protestators, Atheists, Nihilists, and Anarchists, men of the Terror," of whom H. P. Blavatsky spoke; others will attempt to apply and understand these words of W. Q. Judge:

> We must be ready to say at any moment under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: "It is just what I in fact desired." For only those ideals can be dissipated which rest upon a lower basis than the highest aim, or which are not in accord with Nature's (God's) law. And as our aim ought to be to reach the supreme condition and to help all other sentient beings to do so also, we must cultivate complete resignation to the Law, the expression and operation of which is seen in the circumstances of life and the ebb and flow of our inner being. All that can be gotten out of wealth, or beauty, or art, or pleasure, are merely pools of water found along our path as it wanders through the desert of life. If we are not seeking them their appearance gives us intense pleasure, and we are thus able to use them for our good and that of others just so long as the Law leaves them to us; but when that superior power removes them, we must say: "It is just what I in fact desired." Any other course is blindness.

It is not possible to say *for* another person which position is the "best" or closer to the "truth." One man will measure his life's work by the amount of control he has over other men; another, more concerned with the growth of human beings, will watch and hope for ever continuing processes of self-discovery. A passage in a recent issue of *Manas* uses Gandhi to illustrate this:

> Crazy as it may sound, Gandhi was as conscientiously concerned with preserving the condition of growth for the oppressor as he was with relief for the oppressed. An act for freedom, in his eyes, had to be an act of universal benefit, in this sense. This made the struggle for freedom also a struggle for identification with others, even the "enemy." It was his way of declaring, in the most unequal of objective circumstances, that

all men are human, not more, not less. The danger of compromise was eliminated right here, by seeing moral reality as the substance of mutual understanding, and not in total vindication of an abstract right. But what if men refuse to see at all? There is a tab, Gandhi might say, for all past failures of men to try to understand and to be understood. Somebody has to pick it up. This is the meaning of sacrifice, in Gandhian terms. You do not sacrifice your faith in man, rather yourself. As he saw it, allegiance to principle *is* faith in man. He tried in his life to subdivide neither, and was more successful than most.

To outline the scope of the human potential and how it has been expressed through ages of time was the work of H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge. They did not moralize about what one should do, but they did unequivocally suggest what was possible to be done.

The Essence of Aspiration

I had a presentiment that the true man is he who resists, struggles, and is not afraid, in time of great need, to say no, even to God. . . . When I read Cervantes, his hero Don Quixote seemed to me a great saint and martyr who had left amidst jeering and laughter to discover, beyond our humble everyday life, the essence which hides in back of appearances. What essence? I did not know at the time; I learned later. There is only one essence, always the same. As yet, man has found no other means to elevate himself—none but the routing of matter and the submission of the individual to an end which transcends the individual, even though that end be chimerical. When the heart believes and loves, nothing chimerical exists; nothing exists but courage, trust, and fruitful action.

It is our duty to set ourselves an end beyond our individual concerns, beyond our convenient, agreeable habits, higher than our own selves, and disdaining laughter, hunger, even death, to toil night and day to attain that end. No, not to attain it. The self-respecting soul, as soon as he reaches his goal, places it still further away. Not to attain it, but never to halt in the ascent. Only thus does life acquire nobility and oneness.

—Nikos Kazantzakis

IDENTITY

> Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving a single one perhaps knows me as I am. —*The Bhagavad-Gita*

THIS injunction by Krishna to strive to know Him as he is may be seen as differing from the mandate of the Delphic Oracle, "Man know thyself." The latter is addressed to the individual selves of mankind generally, whereas the former would seem to be the voice of Ishwara, the Spirit within man—the "Voice of the Silence"—encouraging the devotee to strive for perfection. When perfection is reached, we become united to and one with the Self of All; when we *know* Krishna as He is, we become what we know.

We must remember, however, that the purpose of our obligatory pilgrimage is to learn, to know, to become; and that the learning, knowing, becoming, must inevitably be preceded and sustained by constant striving.

A pondering on this vast evolutionary scheme is apt to result in the inference that there can be no permanent, eternal, never-ending identity established with the Self of All. H.P.B. quotes a sacred Sloka (*S.D.* II, 80): "The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action." Then begins another Manvantara, built on what was learned during the last active period.

Truly the problem of identity is wrapped in mystery and paradox, as any student who has tried to sort out the meaning and applications of such terms as Monad, Ego, Self, Spirit, Soul, Jiva, personality, individuality, well knows. One who tries to "look within" for knowledge may sometimes feel compelled to back himself into a corner and demand an answer to the questions, What am I? What is the purpose and meaning of my having to make this obligatory pilgrimage? This, we may think, indicates that he must seek more deeply "within."

Man has a dual nature—a compound of the aims and desires of

two distinct poles of "self" in one body. Conflict, he finds, is inevitable. To resolve this dilemma, we need to draw on all the resources of the higher nature and on all that can be garnered from the teachings. Only this would seem to comply with the command of the Delphic Oracle to try to find out which—if either—of these "selves" he should identify himself with.

Richard De Martino, in his contribution (with Erich Fromm and Daisetz Suzuki) to the book *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis,* says: "The ego must die as ego." And in the *Diamond Sutra* we are told that "cherishing the idea of an ego-entity, a personality, a being, or a separated individuality" is an illusion. Plotinus, it has been suggested, affirms that we can raise ourselves to a "superior condition where we may cognize ourselves and become united with Intelligence—Buddhi." There is this further reading of Plotinus' meaning:

> Then by Intelligence, man thinks himself; no more indeed as being man,—man-stage necessary, only temporary,—but as having become superior to man; as having been transported into the intelligible Reason, and drawing thither with himself the best part of the soul—higher Manas—the one which alone is capable of taking flight toward thought, and of receiving the fund of knowledge resulting from the intuition.

As another example, there is this, attributed to the Buddha: "Monks, remember that there is within man no abiding principle whatever, only the learned disciple who has acquired wisdom, in saying 'I am,' knows what he is saying."

It would seem reasonable to infer from this that man, as *man,* has no "real" existence at all; that the human stage is simply one of the many differing stages of growth and development that the Eternal Pilgrim—the Immortal Monad—has to go through from spirit to matter and back again to spirit. In Section III of the *Diamond Sutra* it is stated:

> All living creatures are caused by Me—Buddha—to attain Unbounded Liberation. Yet when uncountable, immeasurable numbers of beings have been thus liberated, verily *no being* has been liberated.

A footnote adds this commentary: "Liberation is reached through Enlightenment. Liberation is not *of* a being, but *from* a being—or man." This seems to imply that it is not what we call the "man himself"—whether we call him an ego, a being, a soul, the self, or what

not—that is liberated, but that it is the Immortal Monad, the "Eternal Pilgrim," that is liberated from the bonds of that particular phase of the pilgrimage.

In the foregoing, it may be noted, we have mingled quotations from H.P.B. with extracts from various works drawing on the exoteric Buddhist tradition. The latter may be useful as means of making one-sided points, but they may also be misleading. The denial of any "ego," characteristic of Theravada Buddhism, seems, in the light of *Secret Doctrine* teaching, a cutting of the Gordian knot of the mystery of the ego, rather than first steps in explanatory untying. The latter may be impossible in this age, yet there are things said by H.P.B. which should caution against acceptance of the severe, reductionist logic of exoteric Buddhism. One modern writer on Buddhism, Edward Conze, seems aware of wider possibilities. As he puts it in *Buddhism* (Philosophical Library):

> Now suppose that Mr. John Smith is fed up with this state of affairs in which everything is just produced for a short time in order to be destroyed again. Suppose he wishes to become immortal. Then he has no choice but to deny himself throughout the whole length and breadth of his being. Anything in himself he has to get rid of. Just try to think of what is left of Mr. Smith after he has become immortal. His body would obviously be gone. With the body his instincts would have disappeared—since they are bound up with his glands, with the needs of his tissues, in short with the body. His mind also, as he knows it, would have to be sacrificed. Because this mind of ours is bound up with bodily processes, its operations are based on the data provided by the bodily organs of sense, and it reveals its impermanence by incessantly and restlessly jumping from one thing to another. With the mind would go his sense of logical consistency. As a matter of fact, Mr. John Smith, turned immortal, would not recognize himself at all. He would have lost everything that made him recognisable to himself and to others. And he could be born anew only if he had learned to deny all that clutters up the immortal side of his being—which lies, as the Buddhists would put it, outside his five skandhas—if he would deny all that constitutes his dear little self. . . .
>
> But as I have said, it all depends upon one's view of the nature of man. Those who regard man as a creature of the earth only, will be inclined to regard this Buddhist yearning for immortality with the snail which leaves its house in order to go on a flying expedition. Those who regard man as essentially a spiritual being will prefer the Buddhist simile of the mountain swans who, when they have left their mountain lake, go from puddle to pud-

> dle, without making their home anywhere, until they are back to their true home in the clear waters of the mountain lake.

Notice that in this Upanishadic "shaving process," the stripping off or leaving behind applies to the personal man. Yet Mr. Conze keeps the question open, and we may turn for elaboration to H.P.B., who indeed devoted very nearly all her efforts to providing her readers with a sense of reality for that aspect of man's nature which lies on the other side of mortality. As she performs the stripping, there is revealed, not negation, but subtler structures of being, ever more durable habitations of the soul, compatible with the universality of consciousness achieved. The exoteric Buddhists, in their denial of an enduring ego, one may think, feared to risk a materialization of these spiritual conceptions of man's inner being, and solved the problem by ignoring them in the popular teaching. But as H.P.B. remarks in connection with cosmological processes (an analysis which may be made to apply by analogy here):

> It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this conclusion of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. (*S.D.* I, 44-45.)

Thus exoteric Buddhism, as a "religion," jumps to the condition of blankness too soon, and says there is no thread-soul, no surviving spiritual essence, no individual monad. The metaphysics of *The Secret Doctrine* corrects this as well as many other over-simplifications. Study of this book prepares the mind for growing into higher forms of self-recognition, which do indeed depend upon loss of egotism, self-love, and all the many forms of the heresy of separateness. A Taoist paradox, quoted by Mr. Conze, seems appropriate here: "[*The Sage*] *forgets himself and he is preserved. Is it not because he is not self-interested that his self-interest is established?*" A statement in *The Secret Doctrine*, however, is categorical:

> To see in Nirvana annihilation amounts to saying of a man plunged in a sound *dreamless* sleep—*one that leaves no impression on the physical memory and brain, because the sleeper's Higher Self is in its original state of absolute consciousness* during those hours—that he, too, is annihilated. The latter simile answers to only one side of the question—the most material; since *reabsorption* is by no means such a "dreamless sleep," but, on the

> contrary, absolute existence, an unconditioned unity, or a state, to describe which human language is absolutely and hopelessly inadequate. The only approach to anything like a comprehensive conception of it can be attempted only in the panoramic visions of the soul, through spiritual ideations of the divine monad. Nor is the individuality—*nor even the essence of the personality,* if any be left behind—lost, because re-absorbed. For, however limitless—from a human standpoint—the para-nirvanic state, it has yet a limit in Eternity. Once reached, the same monad will *re-emerge* therefrom, as a still higher being, on a far higher plane, to recommence its cycle of perfected activity. The human mind cannot in its present stage of development transcend, scarcely reach, this plane of thought. It totters here, on the brink of incomprehensible Absoluteness and Eternity. (I, 266.)

Yet H.P.B. says "*scarcely* reach," to strive after the meaning is not futile—and so, for the philosophic needs and potentialities of the age, she puts into words this incomparably subtle doctrine of immortality and individuality. It is a basic reference-point for all our musing, a conceptualization of that which is finally known only by becoming. And thinking about all this must indeed be a part of the becoming, if only its smallest beginning, or we should not have her book.

THE PATH OF IDEAS

Ideas do not run from great man to great man, nor from small man to great man, nor, again, from great men to small men. Milton or Blake or Hugo have had practically no influence on subsequent thought. But the ideas which they expressed, to which they bore witness in their time, continue to evolve apart from them, in ways that might be strange to them. Ideas really evolve in the masses, in unknown people. Some great man at one point of the evolution of the ideas expresses and also distorts a part of what he has adopted, or as he sometimes thinks originated. Then, centuries later perhaps, another great man gives a new shape again to the descendants of those thoughts. . . .

—DENIS SAURAT

on the lookout

A Condensed "Secret Doctrine"

An Abridgement of the Secret Doctrine, edited by Elizabeth Preston and Christmas Humphreys and published in 1966 by the Theosophical Publishing House in London, has the virtue of being based on the original two-volume edition of H.P.B.'s major work, and reflects no influence save a desire to provide students with a shortened version for what is hoped will be an easier grasp of recondite Theosophical teachings. The basis of the condensation is described by the editors in a Foreword:

> To reduce some thirteen hundred pages to some three hundred pages meant that the Editors had to decide what to leave in, rather than what to cut out. Clearly, the Introduction, the Proem, the actual Stanzas of Dzyan and the Commentaries thereon take precedence. Clearly the long quotations from contemporary writers which the author refutes in equal detail are the first to be cut out. It is in the large remaining field that difficulties of choice arise. Much that is off the main axis of the book's development, on symbolism, comparative religion and scientific theories of the 1880's must also go, for this material does not actively enlarge our knowledge of Cosmogenesis and Anthropogenesis, the coming into being of the Universe, and the origin of Man. Within this field the Editors have made such cuts as were inevitable, realizing that much material of value would be thereby omitted. At times the continuity from surviving portion to portion was difficult to keep smooth, and a line of dots (. . .) has been inserted to warn the reader of a big break.
>
> At all times the Editors had in mind the reader who would be using the Abridgement as an introduction to the larger work, and have therefore published the original Contents in full. It will thus be obvious which whole sections have been removed and which remain in part only.

Exegesis of Buddhism

Mr. Humphreys, as many students know, has long been active in the Buddhist movement in England, and throughout his career has often expressed his reliance on the teachings of H.P.B. as representing an illumination of what the Buddha truly taught. His alli-

ance with the Buddhist revival is perhaps explained by something he wrote in the May 1966 *Middle Way,* the journal of the Buddhist Society: "Had the Theosophical movement remained true to H. P. Blavatsky and to the Secret Doctrine which her Master taught her in Tibet, there might now be a nucleus of universal Brotherhood to form which the Theosophical Society was founded." Speaking of the present volume, he said:

> This Abridgement may help to restore the Teacher and the Teaching to their rightful place in the movement. . . . A biography of H. P. Blavatsky, the genesis of *The Secret Doctrine* and a brief bibliography will help the student to use what may be the means to a renaissance of true Theosophy.

The *Abridgement* is thus a labor of love and an act of loyalty to the Teacher. It cannot help but serve the purposes Mr. Humphreys describes. Even though there may be those who feel that direct work in the Theosophical movement is the best way to accomplish these ends, it would be ungracious and beside the point to fail to recognize the clear integrity of the expressions attending publication of this volume. And if lifetime students of the original edition of *The Secret Doctrine* remain convinced that work with this book as first published is more in keeping with the educational purposes of its author—the process of learning, from such a one, may involve subtler values than an intellectual grasp of the great doctrines communicated—it can hardly be doubted that the Movement as a whole will benefit from the efforts of Miss Preston and Mr. Humphreys. The book is available through the Theosophical Society. The price, in the United States, is $7.28.

No More War

Increasingly, as the years go by, men are turning away from any justification of war as an instrument of national policy. While the threat of nuclear destruction and the horrors of Hiroshima are prime causes of the development of these feelings, the shallow logic of distinguishing between the crime of killing a thousand men with "ordinary" explosive and killing a million by atomic means is seen by many. So the modern rejection of nuclear war may eventually become a rejection of *all* war. Some passages from an article by Burnham Terrell in the January-February *Humanist* illustrate the new temper:

> "War," so General Sherman is supposed to have said, "is hell." He knew his war, and he did much to make it what it is

today, but this theology is questionable. It is unfair to Hell. . . . Let us consider Hell as it is conceived by those who have not taken leave of their senses and their feelings. They think of Hell as a place of punishment for the wicked. Such a Hell may be a myth, but at least it makes moral sense in a way that the doctrines of Original Sin and universal damnation except for the arbitrarily elect do not. But if that is Hell, war is not Hell. Hell is sane; there is discrimination between the innocent and the wicked. War is insane and indiscriminate. . . .

Man's Ways to Man

Humanists must face honestly the question that war sets before them. They have repudiated the arguments advanced in defense of the supernatural God of the theologians, the maker of Heaven and Earth whose voice is heard in the thunder and whose hand hurls the thunderbolt. Will they then embrace the arguments invented on behalf of Leviathan, that mortal God, the State, the ruler and destroyer of peoples? Unconvinced by all attempts to justify God's ways to man, are they to be persuaded by those that justify man's ways to man in modern warfare? My answer is that they cannot be persuaded that war is justifiable. The acceptance of war as an instrument of national policy is as much, perhaps more, an act of faith as the acceptance of suffering and death as instances of the mysterious and wonderful workings of Providence. . . . The torments of war are indiscriminate; the warmakers' doctrine of total war, according to which all victims are indiscriminately guilty, is their equivalent of Original Sin. The Calvinist dogma makes inescapably guilty all of the seed of Adam and lets God save whom He will. The dogma of modern warfare makes inescapably guilty all subjects of the enemy State, and leaves salvation to chance. The two are much the same.

"Pretended" Law

Many years ago, Madame Blavatsky condemned the "struggle for existence" as an excuse for war, agreeing with the Orientalist, Emile Burnouf, that this supposed "law of nature" should be refuted, and promising that the work of spreading Theosophy would accomplish this great change in human attitudes. She wrote:

It will do this, not by disproving the relative existence of the law in question, but by assigning to it its due place in the harmonious order of the universe; by unveiling its true meaning and nature by showing that this *pseudo* law is a "pretended" law indeed, as far as the human family is concerned, and a fiction of the most dangerous kind. "Self-preservation," on these lines, is indeed and in truth a sure, if a slow, suicide, for it is a policy of mutual homicide, because men by descending to its practical

application among themselves, merge more and more by a retrograde reinvolution into the animal kingdom. This is what the "struggle for life" is in reality, even on the purely materialistic lines of political economy. Once that this axiomatic truth is proved to all men, the same instinct of self-preservation only directed into its true channel will make them turn to *altruism*—as their surest policy of salvation.

Cayce on Atlantis

The Sunday newspaper supplement, *This Week,* for last Dec. 18 printed extracts from Jess Stearn's current book, *Edgar Cayce—The Sleeping Prophet* (Doubleday), having to do with the late psychic healer's predictions of the re-emergence of portions of Atlantis. The article is long, and garnished with the *ooh-ah* flavor to be expected of journalistic accounts of psychic wonders, yet it has some independent interest in reports of recent discoveries that seem to add to confirmation of the reality of the lost continent. Students of *The Secret Doctrine* will hardly rely upon Cayce's psychic revelations—although as a healer similiar to the nineteenth-century clairvoyant, Andrew Jackson Davis, he deserves respect—but they may find the scientific evidence suggestive. Mr. Stearn writes in one place:

To some, the Azores, 800 miles due west of Portugal, represent the eastern marches of the last of the Atlantean islands. And recent activity there is a striking reflection of the instability that may have dropped Atlantis in the Atlantic thousands of years ago. Quiet for centuries, the Azores began erupting in 1957, curiously close to the year of 1958, which Cayce saw as the 40-year beginning of large-scale breakups around the globe. In February of 1964, there was another series of quakes.

Submerged Islands

Mr. Stearn reports that in 1963 a Russian geologist dredged up rocks from a depth of 6,600 feet, sixty miles north of the Azores. There was evidence that these rocks had been exposed to air at approximately 15,000 B.C. Cayce thought one of the submergences of Atlantis occurred around that time. The Bahamas, he said, were also a part of Atlantis, and Mr. Stearn relates that the geologist, L. S. Kornicker, has since found a submerged chain of islands ten miles south of Bimini in the Bahamas, now between forty and fifty feet beneath the surface. A Cayce reading predicted that temples of the Atlanteans would be found in the sea near Bimini, off the coast of Florida. Mr. Stearn comments:

> In a way, the prophecy has come true. A group of scientists sailing and scuba-diving in 35-foot depths southeast of Bimini, saw on its side in the coral sea a beautiful round white pillar about 16 feet long. Examination of a fragment revealed it was of the purest marble. A pillar from a sunken temple of Atlantis? It will take another expedition, armed with heavy salvage equipment, to find out.

Other portions of Mr. Stearn's discussion draw the familiar parallels between the cultural remains of ancient American civilizations and the traditions of Atlantis. For the great majority of people, these discoveries do not prove the mind-stretching events that they might, and would, were the idea of an ancient Atlantic continent bearing a high civilization seriously accepted. But the evidence keeps on accumulating, and some day, regardless of the effect on current anthropological theory, Atlantis will be recognized as no longer an imaginative story told by Plato, but archaic fact.

Reaching Backward in Time

A UPI dispatch from Lima, Peru (Los Angeles *Times,* Jan. 8), tells of recently discovered ruins in the northern jungles. Gene Savoy, an American photographer and explorer who has led four expeditions to the area, "attributes the vast complex of forest and temples to the pre-Inca Chachapoyas culture and calls its central city Monte Peruvia." Mr. Savoy believes that the ancient city may contain sculptures, but this will not be verified until qualified archeologists arrive to direct the "digging." As the *Times* tells it:

> Monte Peruvia is a metropolis built of white limestone and contains hundreds of residences, agricultural terraces, palaces, temples and stone roads. Some of the buildings are two and three stories high and contain doors, windows, niches, and stairways up to three hundred feet long.
>
> Savoy describes Monte Peruvia as a city built on top of a series of hills at an altitude of 10,000 feet. His group traced roads from the city deep into the jungles, where they uncovered four satellite cities and a dozen temple structures and agricultural settlements. Savoy thinks the discovery opens the way for new studies of Peru's past and may challenge traditional concepts of the origin of Peruvian culture.

In both *Isis* and *The Secret Doctrine,* H.P.B. shows Peru to have been the seat of a very ancient culture—just how ancient may be guessed from the following passage (*S.D.* II, 317):

> The oldest remains of Cyclopean buildings were all the handiwork of the Lemurians of the last sub-races; and an occultist

> shows, therefore, no wonder on learning that the stone relics found on the small piece of land called Easter Island by Captain Cook, are "very much like the walls of the Temple of Pachacamac or the Ruins of Tia-Huanaco in Peru" . . . and that they are in the CYCLOPEAN STYLE. . . . There were civilized people and savages in those days as there are now.

The Case of the Sleepy Bears

The sure guide of instinct in animal life continues to puzzle and awe scientists. The hibernation of the bears in Yellowstone National Park was recently made a project of research (reported in *Reader's Digest* for October, 1966). Why do the bears independently choose the same day to begin their winter sleep? In an attempt to answer this question, the investigators variously labeled and, using electronic devices, tracked a population of 300 grizzly bears, finding that, although afflicted by a heavy drowsiness as the winter wore on, the bears, wherever they were, resisted sleep. What they were waiting for eventually became apparent—"a drifting, blowing storm that would cover their tracks as they hurried to their dens." When it came they all holed up. Musing on this protective delay in the mandate of instinct, the reporter of this study, Frank Craighead, allowed that while many of the secrets of bear life had been found out, "the most awesome one remained unknown—the 'feel' of that final storm that would bind the lakes in ice . . . until spring." Turning poet, Mr. Craighead said: "Perhaps that secret was theirs, forever, buried in instinct and the old bear wisdom from millions of years of listening to the murmurs from the earth."

The Guiding Intelligence

A generalized light is thrown on this "old bear wisdom" by a passage in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 425):

> Instinct is the universal endowment of nature by the Spirit of the Deity itself; reason the slow development of our physical constitution, an evolution of our adult material brain. Instinct, as a divine spark, lurks in the unconscious nerve-centre of the ascidian mollusk, and manifests itself at the first stage of action of its nervous system as what the physiologist terms the reflex action. . . .
>
> It grows and develops according to the law of the double evolution, physically and spiritually; and entering upon its conscious stage of development and progress in the cephalous species already endowed with a sensorium and symmetrically-arranged ganglia, this reflex action, whether men of science term

it *automatic,* as in the lowest species, or *instinctive,* as in the more complex organisms which act under the guidance of the sensorium and the stimulus originating in distinct sensation, is still one and the same thing. It is the *divine instinct* in its ceaseless progress of development. This instinct of the animals, which act from the moment of their birth each in the confines proscribed to them by nature, and which know how, save in accident proceeding from a higher instinct than their own, to take care of themselves unerringly—this instinct may, for the sake of exact definition, be termed automatic; but it must have either within the animal which possesses it or *without,* something's or some one's *intelligence* to guide it.

This belief, instead of clashing with the doctrine of evolution and gradual development held by eminent men of our day, simplifies and completes it, on the contrary. It can readily dispense with special creation for each species; for, where the first place must be allowed to formless spirit, form and material substance are of a secondary importance. Each perfected species in the physical evolution only affords more scope to the directing intelligence to act within the improved nervous system.

One Such "Perfected Specimen"?

In "The Intellectual and Emotional World of the Cockroach," by Howard E. Evans (*Harper's,* December, 1966), this lowly insect emerges as one of Nature's triumphs. The article, indeed, might even suggest that cockroaches, like bees, have not had "their original differentiation in this chain of globes, but must have been produced and finished in some other from which they were brought over into this" (*Ocean,* p. 133). According to Dr. Evans, curator of insects at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, the roach has inhabited this earth for more than 250 million years, some 3,500 species still existing; and the earliest fossils are enough like those now living to appear "freshly crushed by an irate housewife." The complicated alarm system of the cockroach, he suggests, may account for its survival—long and active antennae on the head and a short similar structure, the *cerci,* in the rear. The *cerci,* sensitive to the slightest current of air, send impulses with great rapidity along nerves leading directly to the legs.

Cockroaches have been used in basic studies of animal behavior and are apparently among the "brighter" insects; they have been trained to run a maze—"a trick few insects can master." (Oriental cockroaches were found to have short memories and had to be retrained each day, whereas the American species not only remem-

bered from day to day, but improved with practice!) Like other insects, cockroaches produce no hormones, but the female secretes a chemical in the head which seems to affect the production of eggs. Mating patterns and ways of caring for the eggs vary slightly, but all species show a high degree of instinctive intelligence. One species, the Surinam, has learned to produce only females. To those of us who know the cockroach only as an intruder in the home, he may appear a repulsive insect, but, in Dr. Evans's words, "to a student of roaches, it is self-evident that any creature so beautifully adapted and adaptable is worth lifetimes of study."

"Nature," says H.P.B., "never creates the smallest, the most insignificant form without some definite purpose and use." The findings of Dr. Evans lend point to a brief passage by Mr. Judge in his article, "Universal Applications of Doctrine":

> What happens when, with intention, you crush out the life of a common croton bug [a variety of cockroach]? Well, it is destroyed and you forget it. But you brought it to an untimely end, short though its life would have been. Imagine this being done at hundreds of thousands of places in the State. Each of these little creatures had life and energy; each some degree of intelligence. The sum total of the effects of all these deaths of small things must be appreciable. If not, then our doctrines are wrong and there is no wrong in putting out the life of a human being.

Biological Activity on Mars?

The science editor of the Los Angeles *Times* (Oct. 19, 1966) calls attention to recently obtained data on Mars, provided by a machine (interferometer) which analyzes light beams. Interpreting these findings, Dr. Lewis Kaplan, of Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, says that the methane (natural gas) present in Mars' atmosphere suggests that there may be "biological activity" on Mars:

> Whether produced biologically or not, the detection of methane in the Martian atmosphere shows the presence of materials containing hydrogen atoms. This is important because previous theories concerning Mars held that it was too small a planet to be able to hang on to any hydrogen.

Life on other planets is discussed in the *S.D.* (I, 203): "Archaic astronomy, and the ancient, physical and mathematical sciences, expressed views identical with those of modern science, and many of far more momentous import. A 'struggle for life' as a 'survival of the fittest' in the worlds above, as on our planet here below, are distinctly taught."